1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

491 494 496 Today the roads both great and small provide all-weather routes for every kind of local traffic. They carry many lorries and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad – the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

491 The main roads are much more direct. They follow divides and occasionally cut right across high bog country. Today they negotiate bogs, which once would have prohibited any sort of transportation during wet weather, by dint of side ditches and high crowns of gravel and dirt. Over high country they have better foundations and wander in comparatively straight fashion through the country.

491 653 At various points along these main roads there are branches today penetrating the countryside. These are rougher and simpler constructions of crushed stones taken from local quarries, leased by the County Council. The stone is broken by laborers and small farmers of the district through which the road runs. In the case of the smaller roads each landholder is responsible for the bit of the road that runs by his land. "Road metal," as the crushed stone is called, is spread during the late autumn, winter, or very early spring. When the weather is dry, in summer, a fine white dust rises after every vehicle. But in the rainy months of spring and winter the roads are soft and full of chuck holes, and new stones must be laid down. Then the heavy iron-tired carts of the farmers break them further and press them into the soft roadbeds.

● [493]

The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction.

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics.

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler.

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

493 two or three motor cars for important guests and the prin-
494 cipals. At election time the local political organizations of the national parties provide free transport to the polls for the old and lame. In all else the motor car is the mark of the townsman, either the produce-collector in his lorry or the man of influence on a jaunt.

493 Even at such times of high ceremony as weddings, funerals,
494 and elections the country people still use the horse and
554 trap or sidecar. This is the traditional mode of polite travel, and it retains its popularity today. The trap is used only by the whole family or by its adult farm-owning members. It is used only in connection with activities of importance which mark their own status and those to whom they travel. It is always used at funerals and marriages. It sometimes transports all the family in Sunday best to church. It is brought out to honor a visitor or announce the arrival or departure of a friend. And it is used occasionally on visits of state to the town. Sunday clothes always go with it. It would be a very big farmer who used the trap in all his trips to town.

493 The vehicle-of-all-work, and the one on which produce
494 goes to market and shop-bought goods come back, is the common two-wheeled cart. The farmers call it a "car." With the addition of side boards it becomes a "creel" and can carry small livestock, turf, and many another bulky object. Occasionally it appears on Sunday, but one never sees it in times of high ceremony such as in a funeral procession. It is the vehicle of everyday working life. Even the younger members of the family may use it sometimes in going about their work. But it is most often to be seen in the hands of the man of the house.

The ass and car, on the other hand, ordinarily has no such eminence. The donkey cart is a woman's vehicle. It takes her and her farm produce to and from the crossroad center. In a town market it is no accident that one can find the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets.

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

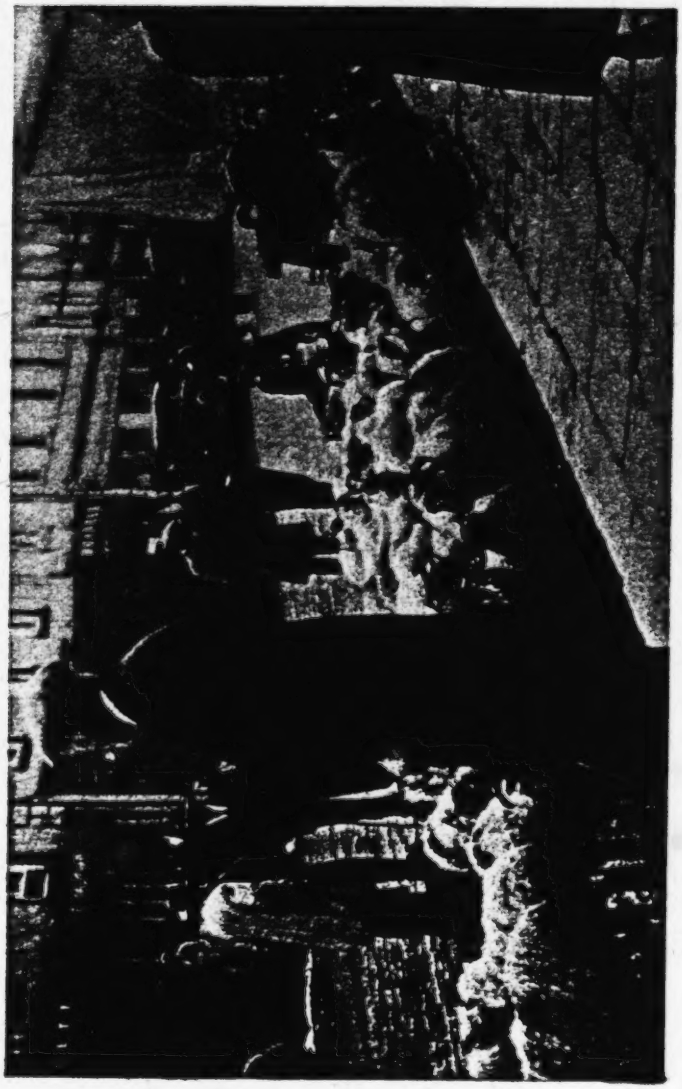
Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just beginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

443
363
● 493



SHEEP FAIR IN A MARKET TOWN

[facing p. 300]

764 578 and sheep and horses being driven across to fairs at either side. The hollow is still named Eisc na gCorp (The Hollow of the Corpses), but travellers over the new road, which by-passed the hollow, cannot see it except they are told about it and search for it. To get back to my father's story: the Kerrymen, a hundred or more strong, had lined the boundary-line with their weapons ready for action and, as the Corkmen approached the flat stone, the Kerry leader ordered them to lay down the coffin on it.

"*Leagaidh síos annsan anois í! Ná téighidh a thuille!*"[1] he ordered, indicating the stone with his stick.

The Corkmen obeyed the order, and the Kerrymen then took the coffin on their shoulders and bore it down the mountainside into their own territory and along the six miles of road to the graveyard at Kilmackillogue. No fighting took place at the border-line on that day. But it was not always so on previous occasions. I heard the old people of the parish say that fights took place in former years when funerals crossed the boundary at Leac na gCorp, and that some of those engaged had been killed.

I know of three other boundary-lines where similar precautions were taken against those who carried the coffin to the border-line forcing their way across, while still carrying the remains. The first was at Glaise'n Fhineáin, a stream some miles to the west of Leac na gCorp, in the Béara peninsula, whose waters separate the counties of Cork and Kerry. The second was at Barrlinn, an old mountain road between counties Cork and Kerry, which ran southwards from Kilgarvan in the latter county to Bantry in the former; a cairn lies just beside the boundary-line where funerals halted and bearers were exchanged; fights are said to have taken place here in former times when funerals crossed the border. These two boundary-lines, as well as that described in more detail at Leac na gCorp, are all fairly close together, and all three are at the dividing-lines of parishes as well as counties. I have been told of still another boundary-line where fights took place on funeral days. This is the mountain pass known as Mullach Bhéal in the Dingle peninsula in Kerry, over which funerals passed in former times (before the Connor Hill road was built). These funerals were either on their way westwards from the parish of Clochán to some graveyard in the parishes to the west, or *vice versa*. Old people in that area tell of coffins even having been broken at this point during the attempt to force the boundary-line, and a large cairn marks the spot. Even when this old route was by-passed by the building of the Connor Hill road, and funerals followed the new route, the men from either side who assembled at the boundary insisted that the coffin be handed over to them at that point, and they carried it into their own parish. [493] When carts replaced shoulder-bearers at a later date, the coffin had to be transferred from the cart which had carried it to the border to one from the other parish.

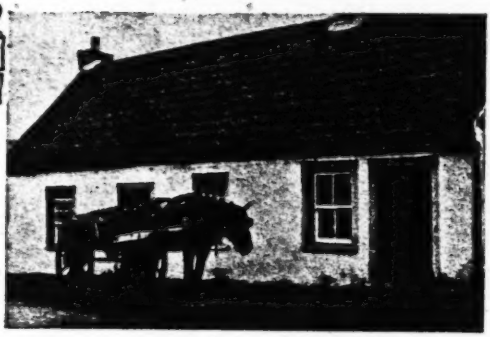
The reason given in more recent times for the insistence on the change of bearers being made at the border was that the men of the second parish (to which the funeral was going) did not wish it to be said by the men of the first parish that their assistance was needed to carry the coffin further; they were strong enough to bear the coffin into and through their own parish without any help from outsiders. This reason is hardly the main one, however, and is likely to have been put forward only when the original reason had been forgotten.

[1] "Lay it down there now! Don't go any further!"

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Plate III

342
[492]
[493]



THATCHED ROOF SECURED WITH PEGGED FIR-ROPES

N. ANTRIM

SCOLLOP THATCH OF MARROM GRASS

MAGILLIGAN CO. DERRY

ROPED THATCH OF RYE STRAW

ARTICLAVE, CO. DERRY

[FACING p. 57]

492 246 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

[493] [407]

246 In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

[171]

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

[476]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Antrim

492
493
342

SLIDE CAR WITH KISH ; STRAW HARNESS

LOW-BACK CAR

BOX-CAR WITH DISC WHEELS

Plate IV.
ALL FROM GLENS OF ANTRIM

SPOKE-WHEELED CAR

[Facing p. 105]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XII.

CARTS AND ROADS.

• 493 It has been claimed that the humble vehicles of certain regions of survival such as the Glens of Antrim represent an evolutionary sequence, the assumption being that the sledge or "slipe" was developed locally into the slide-car and the latter into the solid-wheeled car until the stage of the spoke-wheeled Scotch cart was reached. This argument ignores the wide distribution of similar means of transport in countries overseas, and the extent to which simple ideas are diffused from a common centre. It would be strange indeed if that centre were to be located on the extreme periphery of Europe when parallel forms of transport are found as far away as China. Nevertheless the Irish vehicles are of great ethnological interest, and they have survived because they are adapted to the soft turf bogs or the steep mountain sides. In more recent times the two-wheeled cart has blossomed into several specialized means of transport such as the side-car, the long-car, and the hay-cart or rick-lifter (Chapter 11). The latter is also found in Lowland Scotland and may possibly have originated there.

482 But something must first be said about the still humbler transport agents such as the burden-rope, the back-creel and side-creel, the use of which has greatly declined, however, during the last half century. The two former show to what extent men and women, but especially women, act as beasts of

[p. 105]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

burden in Ireland as among other peasantries. The burden-rope, constructed of rushes, horse-hair or grass-rope (Chap. 14 and Figs. 79 & 80), was employed for carrying surprisingly large loads of hay, corn or bushes—" as much as a pony could draw," I have been told—while the burden-creel, slung over one shoulder or worn like a rucksack by women who would thus have their hands free for knitting, was mainly used for carrying turf. Nor should we omit the wheel-barrow, both box and turf types (Chapter 15 and Fig. 90), the hand barrow (for loads of stones and also for fish and nets) and the two-man turf creel (Fig. 91).

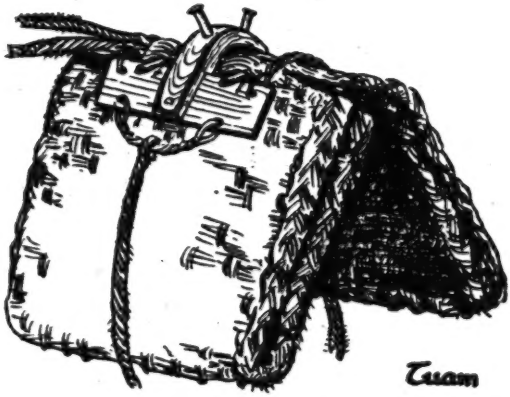
Side-creels are the panniers attached to an ass or small pony. Most of them are constructed with a hinged bottom so that the contents of turf, wrack, gravel or manure are automatically unloaded (Fig. 58). The sides are broken by ornamental " windows " which give a handhold for lifting and help to lighten the creel. Comparative study would reveal several regional and specialized forms of creel, and I have observed different methods of attachment even in neighbouring valleys. They are generally slung on wooden pegs driven into a roof-shaped crutch or straddle (Fig. 56) which rests on two straw mats. In the example figured from Tuam (Fig. 57) the straw mats are pegged together, and the straddle is strengthened by two osier ties, to one of which the tail-sugán is fastened. When hay or corn is being carried the creels may be dispensed with and the " bottles " or sheaves hung on the straddle pegs with an osier ring. Alternatively the creels are tied together with ropes which pass over a thick straw pad laid along the animal's spine, and the straddle is not used. The creels are D-shaped and can be made of openwork, for turf or wrack, or of closely-woven sides for manure. We shall have something more to say about their construction in Chapter 14.

Fig. 56.

Among horse-drawn vehicles the sledge or slipe is very generally employed for transporting stones, manure, or turf and also for conveying the plough and harrows from one field to another. I illustrate the common slipe of Co. Antrim

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

285
492
493



Straw pads & straddle for Creels

Fig. 57.

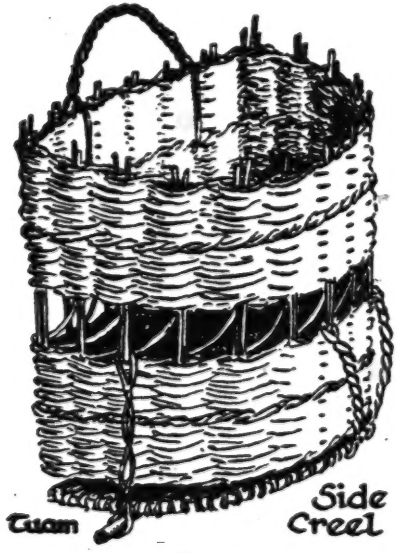


Fig. 58.

[p. 107]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 (Fig. 59): the type used for drawing manure in Co. Down has the runners set close together so that it can be easily tipped over to empty. An even simpler sledge described as a "triangular framework" is said to have been used for dragging boulders out of fields. I have not seen this, but a similar "forked runner sledge" is known in Sweden.

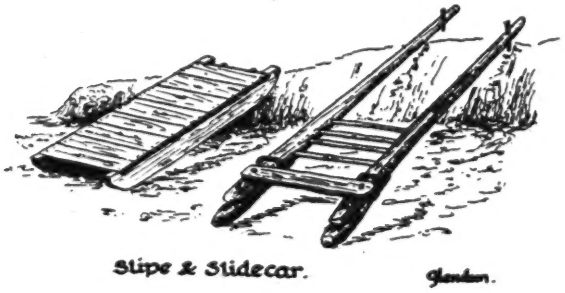


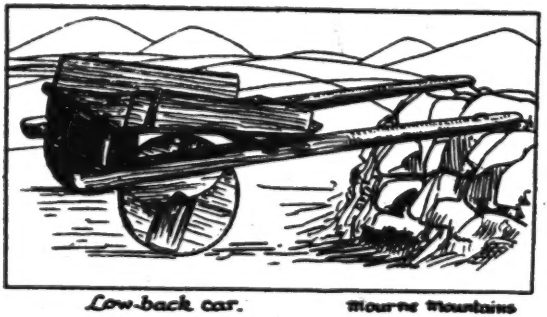
Fig. 59.

The slide-car (Fig. 59), now confined to a few hilly districts such as the Antrim Glens, was almost universal a century ago. It consists of two strong poles or shafts—bog timber was often used for the purpose—the ends of which slide on the ground. Attached to the ends by wooden pegs and an iron ring (called the "bowman") are short pieces of hardwood which take the wear and tear, though nowadays thin iron runners are often substituted. The shafts are tied together by cross-beams making a rough platform on which rests the wicker "kish," resembling the smaller creels but oval in shape, and like them, adapted to carry either turf or manure. For other loads such as hay or timber the kish is dispensed with. Although they will carry but small weights they can be taken on the roughest of moorland tracks and down slopes of incredible steepness.
492 The harness of the slide-car pony was until recent years
493 made entirely of wood and straw apart from a bit and halter for leading purposes. The straw collar (Chapter 14) was fitted with wooden hames attached to the shafts by short sugán

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

traces. The shafts were also tied by straw ropes to the pegs of a straddle which rested on a back sugán secured in turn by a tail rope of straw. Bridles and halters were sometimes made of horse hair.

The slide car, like so many of the Irish relics we are considering, was found not long ago in the Scottish Highlands and is still used in central Wales. It is common in the Baltic lands and far afield through the mountain country of Europe and the Siberian tundra; and its wide and scattered distribution betokens its high antiquity. In general the slide car is employed for transporting hay and timber in mountain country; and it is of interest to find that in Sweden it is



Low-back car. Mourne Mountains

Fig. 60.

especially associated with the mountain dairies which are paralleled by the Irish booleys (Chapter 6). Scandinavian ethnologists have shown how areas which had the slide-car have become regions of the one-horse cart and have generally remained without the four-wheeled waggon. This applies with peculiar force to Ireland. (Pl. IV.)

The older style of two-wheeled cart is that known as the "wheel" or "low-back" car, which survives in the same environments as the slide-car. I illustrate an example from the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down (Fig. 60). The solid disc wheels lie under the body of the car and are fixed to an axle,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 now of iron but formerly of wood, that rotates with them. The wheels are so small—little more than two feet in diameter—that the floor of the car has to be raised up behind, and it carries such a small load that the number of horses in Ireland is said to have been considerably reduced when the spoke-wheeled cart took its place. In the 18th century "wheel-cars were used throughout the kingdom" in town and country alike: the Dublin "noddies" were of this type, and according to illustrations published in the early 18 hundreds the driver rode on the horse's rump. The low-backed car is now generally fitted with sides to make a "box car," but in former days it carried a kish of the kind used with the slide car. It should be noticed that until roads and tracks were [491] metalled—mostly within the last two centuries—the disc wheel had the advantage over the spoked wheel in soft loose ground. Even "superior farmers" in Donegal had only low-back cars as late as 1821, and we may repeat the statement made in Chapter 6 that there was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one Donegal parish in 1837. The slide [177] car and the creel did all the carrying. In the Glens of Antrim, too, the wheel-car was apparently something of a novelty about that time. An old man told me that his grandmother remembered the first car seen in her valley.

[401] It must not be assumed from this that wheeled vehicles were unknown in ancient Ireland: the literature suggests that they were in regular use but doubtless confined to the wealthier classes and districts. On analogy with other parts of north-western Europe the wheel was already known in Bronze Age Ireland. It is wrong to assume that the wheel was "invented" by the Irish peasants who adapted it to their slide cars. The disc and in turn the spoked wheel are ancient discoveries which came into use gradually as social conditions and road-making improved, and it was natural that the slide car should keep its form though lifted off the ground. Although we cannot accept the theory of local "evolution" for the spoke-wheeled cart, it is none the less clear that local experience controlled the details of its construction when it became

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred years. 493

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little " dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long " runners " which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or " trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a " box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a " soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate. [531] [492]

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the " two-wheeled " culture region. 493 178

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but 491

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

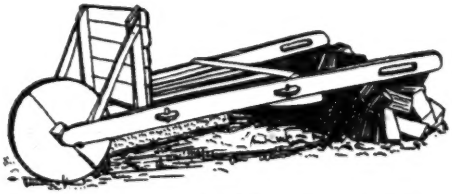
3|4
4|3

drawal of the blade, and the expanded socket acts in the same way. An interesting method of hafting is found in the "diamond" breast spade of East Galway (Fig. 88) in which the handle is fitted by soaking it to expand and grip the diamond-shaped perforations in the socket. The flat breast spade has to make two separate cuts before a turf is detached from the face. It has a short handle the length of which, about 2 ft., is adjusted to the length of the user's arm.

An experienced slanesman works with astonishing precision which recalls the steady ticking of a clock, his strong thrusts alternating with little jabs, designed to clean the edge of the spade, which remind the onlooker of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the smith's hammer between his blows. Similarly the co-operation between slanesman, pitcher and spreader, or "holer," is a delightful thing to watch. But the work is hard and relentless. The severed turves may be placed directly on the barrow from the spade, or lifted off by hand two at a time and either loaded or pitched to a third hand who places them on the barrow. On deep

Fig. 89.
Top two are breast slanes.

[493]



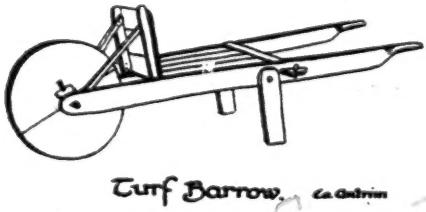


Fig. 90.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuttings a long-handled graip is sometimes used, and the smiths turned out special two-pronged pitching forks for the purpose (Fig. 66). If the peat is soft a long-handled shovel is employed instead. A barrow-load varies in capacity, for instance it is 10 turves in parts of Antrim and 14 in Armagh. The difference depends on the dimensions of the turves as well as the size of the barrow and the state of the bog surface: turves range from about 22 inches by 4 by 5 to 10 inches by 4 by 3, but they shrink considerably as they dry.

The turf barrow is a low solid-wheeled archaic-looking vehicle (Fig. 90) the details of its construction showing as many adaptations to local conditions and traditions as the slane itself. It is a compromise between two opposing needs—a large wheel for ease of pushing over the rough bog surface and a low chassis to facilitate loading and emptying, for the barrow is merely tilted on one side by the spreader, the turves slipping off and standing on end in serried rows to dry. The barrow must be as light as possible: hence no iron is used in its construction except for the axle-ends, and, perhaps, a light tyre for the solid wheel or "trundle." In soft bogs the trundle must be wide—as much as 5 inches—but three inches is more usual. Its diameter ranges from 12 to 18 inches. The legs of the barrow are always short and may be mere lugs, or they may be absent, in which case there must be some arrangement for enabling the handles to be gripped: they are either perforated or upturned (Fig. 90). An interesting variant which I have noticed around Athenry has the legs bent backwards in a curve to act as slides or runners. A curious adaptation to soft bogland is recorded a century ago from Co. Mayo, where both horses and men were "shod with boards" when working in the moss. Box-barrows are something used to transport dried turf, or a "kish" may be placed on the flat barrow. In Armagh "carrying baskets" are employed (Fig. 91).

Little can be said here about the methods adopted to dry the turf: the shapes and names of the various piles into which

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

blackthorn shillelagh. Trailing the long coat or "trusty" was a recognized invitation for a fight.

To the onlooker it appears as though the business of selling is itself in the nature of a fight, such are the hearty and resounding slappings of open hands up and down the street. Then follows the prolonged argument, the cut and thrust of keen bargainers in a circle of interested onlookers, over the amount of "luck money" to be given back to the seller. It is an age-old ritual far removed from the mechanical sale of a pen of cattle at an auction. The establishment of auction sales and latterly of marketing boards not only undermines the business of the country town, but threatens to destroy the intricate fabric which binds together a thousand homesteads in the intercourse of fair day. It is a sad commentary on rural development that in recent years "dole-days" have brought as many people to town as "fair-days."

[493]

Fig. 110. Fair Day.
A bargain is being struck on the left.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(c.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Doghertys, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(d.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(e.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dennistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—Sociology.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct. 463 241 [351] [412]

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [407] [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

231 is said to be due to the expense of importing feedstuffs. Donkeys and Con-
[492] nemara ponies are kept as draft animals, and almost everything is conveyed in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was made in 1907 by a local carpenter from one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required, including lobster pots, fishing nets, furniture, doors, windows, and hand barrows, which consist of two shafts joined by slats and a single wheel in the rear, all of wood.

221 Digging and manuring of the land begins in late February, and seaweed is brought from the shore as needed. The potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's Day (March 17); oats, two to three weeks later; barley and mangolds at the end of April or in May. Most calves are born from March to May. In dry years peat is cut from May onwards, laid out to dry, and eventually stacked in ricks six feet high secured by large stones, or placed against a stone wall. Apart from routine work, there is little to do until the hay harvest, generally in August or September, though sometimes a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with the hope of a second crop in the autumn. Oats and barley are harvested in September, after which the main potato digging takes place, though some are dug earlier for the household. From October to late February, there is little to do except tend the stock, though some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under government schemes. Few farmers make the ricks of peat beside their houses so commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major aim of the Congested Districts Board, and from the eighteen-nineties to the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America, that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly recent development virtually confined to the large towns, especially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads. We should probably make an exception of the English-settled parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargy. Dublin and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, similarly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life: its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread. The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall, and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18 and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children, they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 8

492
493
342
291
285

1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

492
493
417

2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[FACING p. 113]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Fermanagh
County Antrim

PLATE 9

314
516
493
291
412

1. Cutting turf (underfooting) in a Co. Fermanagh bog.

314
417
493
291

2. Building a peat stack, Co. Antrim.

[FACING p. 144]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

time large-scale hay-making developed it had to fit into a fixed rota of farm work which kept men busy in late July and August at flax-pulling and turf-carrying, so that the cocked hay had to wait. Today the baling machine is speeding up the process, but the bales, whether from the need of seasoning or from force of habit, are left piled in angular cocks scattered over the hayfield.

Carried at last to the haggard on rick-shifters or slipes—formerly on slide-cars or the backs of men and ponies—the hay is built into small circular stacks (pikes). As a protection against wind and rain they are thatched with rushes forthwith and roped (Fig. 52). Since the stacks are thatched before they have had time to settle, the pegged or scolloped thatch found in England is not used. Not only do ropes hold the thatch more securely but it is a simple matter to tighten them as the stack sinks. In the simplest form of roping, hanging stones are attached to the rope ends so that the adjustment is automatic. But where the roof of the stack is not rounded but conical a straw-rope is wrapped round in a spiral which can later be tightened by vertical ropes pegged into the lower part of the stack. One sees this spiral roping also in parts of western Britain. Several other patterns of roping are found, some making a complete network; and the shape of the stack also shows many regional variations (Fig. 52). The size and shape depend not only on local custom but to some extent on the weather and the condition of the hay. Small rounded stacks are most usual, for they are wind-resistant. They are characteristic too of much of Highland Britain from Caithness to Cornwall.

The scythe has not entirely given way to the mowing machine on small farms in whose tiny fields it would anyhow be difficult to turn a machine. The Irish scythesmen, though not so well known as the spalpeens or reapers, had their brief day in the English harvest-fields, and those who remember working 'across the water' in the nineteenth century tell of great feats of piece-work. I was told of one heroic figure who could scythe seven acres in the day, 'and four lifters wouldn't lift after him'. Henry Stephens, in 1855, reckoned that the English labourer would scythe four acres of oats or barley in a ten-hour working day.[1]

[1]Quoted in E. C. Curwen, *Plough and Pasture* (1946), 98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XIII

CARS AND CARTS

PEASANT communities concerned primarily with livestock which can be moved on the hoof have little need for elaborate means of transport. Long-tried devices adapted to the difficulties of the terrain continue to be used even in this age of tractors, and Ireland can show a remarkable variety of archaic farm vehicles of simple types. The heavy lumbering wagon would be out of place and out of scale in this environment. It is included in medieval inventories of manors and monasteries but it never took hold of the country, and although some landlords re-introduced English farm wagons in the eighteenth century, they were soon 'laid aside'.[1] The common Irish car was better adapted to the needs and skills of the people as well as to the condition of the roads.

The Irish low-back car, which is not yet extinct, is a light vehicle fitted with block wheels rigidly attached to a rotating axle (Fig. 55). Arthur Young commented that the loads they carried were 'such as an Englishman would be ashamed to take in a wheelbarrow'.[2] Yet he praised them because they required only one horse and did little damage to the roads. Prior to the eighteenth century there were very few roads except for those connecting the towns, and it seems that even the humble low-back cars were rare outside the urban spheres. For farm-work the wheel-less slide-car was used almost everywhere, supplemented by sledges, panniers, back-creels, and burden-ropes. It was progressive landlords who initiated, in the interests of the new agriculture, the construction of roads on their estates; and

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 22.
[2] ibid., 2, 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

491 when the making and repair of 'cross roads' became a public charge it was done on the basis of baronies, and the Grand 493 Juries—composed largely of landlords—became responsible, under the presentment system, for local road-making and repairing. Thus from about 1760 onwards a fairly close network of roads began to be established in the richer parts of the country—especially about the big demesnes—and the way was open for the more capacious spoke-wheeled cart which held its own until in our own day it is being replaced by the lorry and the tractor-trailer.

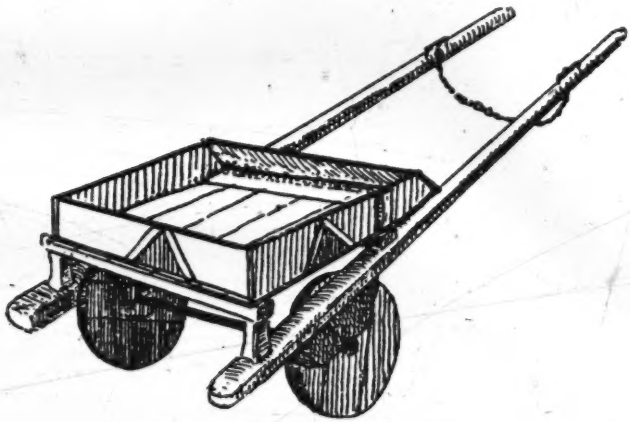


FIG. 55. Wheel-car, Co. Antrim.

175 In the face of abundant evidence as to the backwardness of rural transport and the rarity of wheeled vehicles and made roads 493 until quite recent times, it is startling to read of the prominence of chariotry and of the rapid movement of armies in the Irish legendary histories. In fact, up to date, the archaeological evidence which would clearly establish the use of chariots in early Celtic Ireland is scanty. There can be little doubt, however, that horse-drawn spoke-wheeled vehicles were a significant element in Celtic culture, and it is known that the Romans took into their language nearly a dozen Celtic names for horse-[492] drawn vehicles.[1] Such fragments of harness as have been re-

[1] E. M. Jope, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 57–60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

covered from early Celtic sites in Ireland suggest that the horse was held in high regard and was perhaps reserved for pageants, combats and ceremonies. The detailed evidence in the legendary histories of ancient Ireland for the existence of roads, however, is clear. The fact that the Celtic roads are rarely traceable today is understandable in view of the physical conditions of the country, especially the prevalence of obliterating bogs. Moreover the road system must have decayed with the decline of Celtic culture. In any case it is evident that the use of the chariot was confined to the highest castes, and that its humble relation the block-wheeled car was fated to outlast it. The finely-spoked wheeled vehicles of the Celtic invaders were as much out of place in Ireland as the great wagons which later overlords introduced from England. The block-wheeled car, if not previously known in Ireland, may have been the native response to the impressive magic of the Celtic wheel, or it may have reached this country with Celtic camp-followers. We shall see that it could have been developed from the slide-car which almost certainly preceded it in Europe. The term 'wheel-car' as used in Ireland refers to the block-wheeled car and is clearly meant to distinguish it from the wheel-less slide-car. The spoke-wheeled cart is a newcomer in most parts. Nevertheless there is evidence that a light spoke wheeled cart continued to be used in early Christian times: an example drawn chariot-wise by two horses is figured on the eighth century Ahenny Cross in Co. Tipperary. It seems that such light carts were used for personal transport, for example St. Sampson took one with him, according to an eleventh-century account of his travels, to carry his books across Cornwall on his way from Ireland to Brittany.[1] And the spoke-wheeled cart must have been known in the planted areas since the Middle Ages, so that it is very probable that in parts of the country the cart has had a continuous life since early Celtic times.

But we should first examine certain archaic methods of transport which depend on the carrying power of beasts and men, or rather women, for in simple societies the bearers of children are also the burden-bearers. The romance of rural

[1] O. G. S. Crawford, 'Western Seaways' in *Custom is King* (1936), 196.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 tied bundles on to the straddle-pins, and both sheaves and firewood are occasionally carried on light V-shaped wooden 482 frames. A similar carrying frame is known from Spain. There are several varieties of straddle, and a pattern found on Clare Island, in which one side engages in a hole bored through the [171] other side, finds a parallel in the Shetland Islands and among the Lapps of north Norway: it could be of Norwegian origin. For long hauls the pack animal was undoubtedly the chief means of transport until the coming of the spoke-wheeled cart. For short distances the burden rope (Chapter XV) or the carrying creel was more convenient and it is still not uncommon to see the back-creel, the carrying basket or the hand barrow used for transporting turf or wrack over rough, soft or slippery ground (Fig. 57).

493 In some parts of the country, especially along the east coast, 483 a form of sled fitted with a box body is kept for the transport

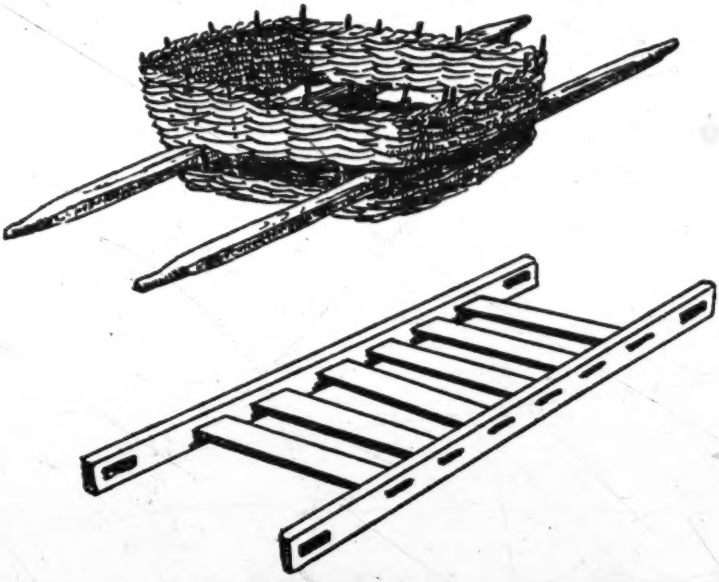


FIG. 57. Turf-basket, Co. Armagh and hand barrow, for carrying nets, Co. Antrim.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

of manure, though it is also used for carrying earth on steep slopes where the soil is washed away and is tediously replaced. In this form of sled the runners are deep and set close together so that the load can be tipped out over the side (Fig. 58, 4). The sled or slipe is a transport-agent of remarkable versatility, ideally suited to small-scale operations involving heavy loads, and it persists because for some purposes no more convenient method of transport can be devised. In the apple-orchards of Co. Armagh, for example, a large, low box-slipe, involving little lifting of the apples, conveys the gathered crop to the store with a minimum of jolting, and it is frequently drawn by a tractor. Similarly the flat slipe finds its uses in hauling large stones in quarry and field, side by side with, and supplementing, elaborate modern machines. To the great advantage of its low body is added its suitability on slopes which are too steep or soils which are too sodden to take wheeled vehicles.

493

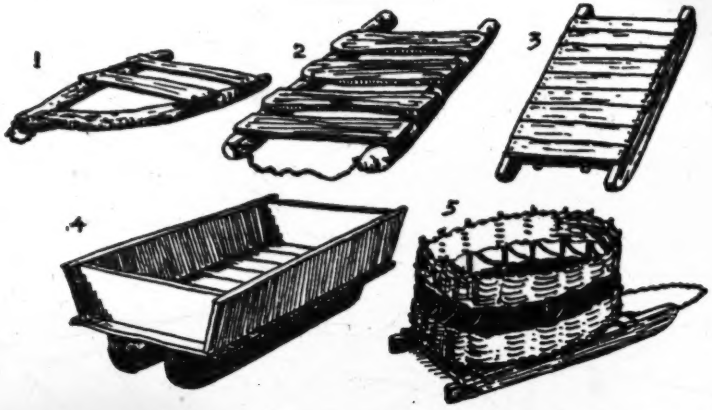


FIG. 58. Slipes. (1) Forked slipe, Co. Antrim. (2, 3) Stone slipes, Co. Down. (4) Manure slipe, Co. Down. (5) Turf slipe, Co. Antrim.

The simplest form of slipe consists of nothing more than a forked branch or young tree with a drag-chain secured to the point of the V (Fig. 58, 1). This forked sledge is not shod and it finds its principal use in moving large boulders from the fields. Some examples I have examined are made of holly which,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 in addition to its strength, is reputed to have special sliding qualities. A forked slipe can be dragged over rough, trackless, 483 boulder-strewn hillsides, where it will make and widen its own path as it goes. In such circumstances, given a favourable gradient, it can be man-hauled, and the persistent use of similar sledges for transporting large stones in other regions of megalithic culture such as the Dordogne—and indeed in Assam for surviving megalithic cults—hints that it comes down to us from very early times. The present distribution area of the forked [171] sledge in Europe, from Scandinavia round to the western Mediterranean, can be correlated with many archaic culture-elements.[1] Its preparation calls for no tool more sophisticated than an axe—even a stone axe would suffice—and as I have watched huge stones being sliped from the fields I have easily imagined myself transported to a clearing in a long vanished Neolithic forest.

The standard flat slipe is a rectangular platform supported on two low parallel runners which may be shod with iron. It will be found on many farms and serves numerous purposes—for hauling stones, potatoes or turf, or for transporting the plough or the harrows from field to field (Fig. 58, 2, 3). There is, however, a simple, light slipe, made either of wood or of iron, which is kept specially for moving the wheel-less plough (Fig. 42). The wooden form finds exact parallels in Sweden and the east Baltic lands.

In the Antrim Glens, where topographic conditions and isolation have preserved an unusually full series of archaic vehicles, I have seen a light forked slipe loaded with sacks of peat being man-hauled, the forked end being lifted off the ground by a rope bearing on the puller's shoulder. This is in effect a slide-car, and although the Irish slide-car is always pulled by a pony, it may be noticed that the Swedish slide-car, used mainly for carrying hay, is often man-hauled. No doubt the forked form is the more primitive and there is some evidence to suggest that it was from a forked slide-car that the first European carts and wagons were evolved by the addition of

[1]E. E. Evans, 'Some Archaic Forms of Agricultural Transport in Ulster' in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), (1951), 108–23; J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, *Man*, 51 (1951), 3–5.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

wheels and a draught-pole. The body of the traditional ox-cart of Spain and many parts of India is suggestively triangular in shape. 493 (483)

The horse-drawn, wheel-less slide-car consists in its simplest form of two parallel poles, serving both as shafts and runners, fastened together by cross-pieces which form a carrying platform (Fig. 59). It was widely used down to the eighteenth century, but is now confined in distribution almost entirely to Ulster and in function mainly to the transport of turf from mountain bogs down steep tracks to the valley farms. For this purpose a large creel or kish is secured to the carrying platform, and it will take loads of potatoes or manure as required, but as a vehicle for general farm use the slide-car is now virtually extinct. That it has lingered so long in the mountainous corners of Ulster is perhaps due to the fact that the creel-carrying ass did not supplant it as it did in the milder south and west of Ireland (Pl. 8, 1).

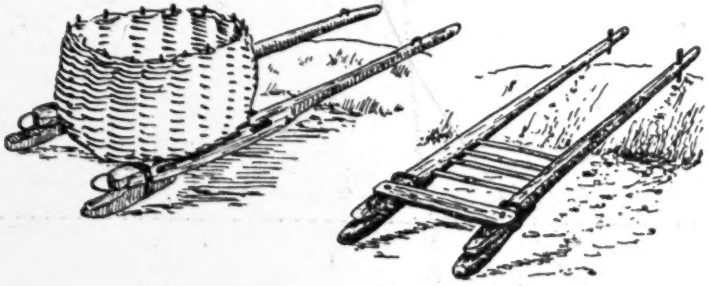


FIG. 59. Slide-cars, Cos. Tyrone and Antrim.

This primitive vehicle, which can be constructed entirely of wood—in treeless districts even bog-timber was utilized[1]—is of high antiquity and of great ethnographic interest. It has been contended that the one-horse wheel-car evolved from a slide-car to which a log roller had been fitted, and in view of the fact that the wheel-car has a revolving axle such an evolutionary sequence seems probable. Gösta Berg thinks that this evolution took place in the heart of Asia,[2] but there is the possibility that

[1]H. Dutton, *Clare* (1808), 65.
[2]Gösta Berg, *Sledges and Wheeled Vehicles* (1935), 140.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 the block wheel was independently invented in north-western Europe, or at least adapted from the log roller as a native response to the novelty of the spoked wheel.

A feature of the Ulster slide-cars which distinguishes them both from Scots and Welsh examples and from most other slide-cars is the provision of separate wooden runners or 'shoes' which are pegged to the ends of the shafts and can be replaced when worn out. They have the effect of reducing somewhat the slope of the platform and its load. Formerly a special slide-car was kept for carrying corn, the sheaves being supported by a [171] hooped frame of osiers which finds parallels in Sweden and Finland. Another archaic feature was the harness, which was [492] constructed, until quite recent times, entirely of wood, straw and withies (Fig. 69).

Slide-cars, 'strange survivals from the twilight of history',[1] 171 are found not only in Highland Britain and the Baltic lands but 493 in many parts of east central Europe, in Siberia, China, Siam and the Indian Deccan. Such a distribution points to a dispersal in high antiquity, probably from western Asia. There is no direct archaeological evidence of ancient slide-cars but it has been plausibly argued that the well-known 'cart tracks' of Malta were made by slide-cars some 3,000 years ago.[2] This humble vehicle is well suited to simple societies, whose transport needs are few, and to country, especially hilly country, without made roads, where the wheel would be out of place.

In Ireland the wheel-car clings to the same districts as the 493 slide-car and serves much the same purpose, but it may occasionally be used for longer journeys by road, for example to take an animal to the fair. (Slide-cars are very injurious to roads and were driven off them by ordinances against their [494] use on the highways). On steep slopes the wheels, being secured to a rotating axle, act as a brake on each other. Measuring only some two feet in diameter, they are composed of three segments of wood dowelled together as in the oldest known Mesopotamian wheels, and shod with an iron hoop. They revolve under the car inside the shafts, so that the body must be raised to give clearance. It is supported by vertical struts morticed into the

[1] A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man* (1898), 161.
[2] H. S. Gracie, *Antiquity* (1954), 91–98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

rear ends of the shafts, which are, however, left projecting so as to take the weight of the tilted car when it is not in use. It is these projecting shafts or 'trams' which give the wheel-car the appearance of a slide-car on wheels and seem to confirm the suggested evolution (Fig. 55).

In eighteenth-century Ireland possession of a wheel-car was a mark of social distinction, and entire districts were without wheeled vehicles of any kind. Down to the middle of the nineteenth century it was considered 'respectable' to go to 'meetings' in a wheel-car in the Presbyterian parts of north Antrim. In the course of the nineteenth century, as the larger spoke-wheeled cart was adopted by prosperous farmers, the little wheel-car sought refuge in the poor mountainous districts where we find it clinging precariously today. As late as the 1914–18 war one was in use on a farm on Black Mountain, within the city boundary of Belfast (Pl. 8, 2).

The wheel-car has its place in history because it was the ancestor of the nineteenth century jaunting-car which Lloyd Praeger rightly lists as one of the essentially native Irish products.[1] The platform of the wheel-car, to which a box body or a wicker-work creel was secured when goods were being carried, became a seat, covered with a straw mat, when the vehicle was used for social occasions. The passengers sat on each side, back to back, their feet dangling near the ground or resting on a hay-rope slung fore and aft, which could accommodate any length of leg. By the end of the eighteenth century this 'side-car', fitted with wooden foot-rests, had become a standard hiring vehicle, and it needed only the substitution of spoked for solid wheels, the addition of springs and consequent alterations of height to give the Irish jaunting-car which Bianconi adopted in 1815 and later developed into the four-wheeled long-car.[2] There can be no doubt that 'the Bians', traversing the highways and byways of the whole country, made a contribution to the social and economic life of Ireland which was, in its day, as important as that of the railway in the latter part of the century or the motor bus in the twentieth century.

The spoked wheel, which throughout the eighteenth century

[1] R. Ll. Praeger, *The Way that I Went* (1937), Ch. I.
[2] I. J. Herring, *U.J.A.*, 3 (1940), 115–22; *U.J.A.*, 7 (1944), 42–46.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 177 [401] was reserved for coaches and the carriages of the rich, was popularized by its adoption for farm carts (Scots carts) under the improving zeal of landlords towards the end of the century. In Ulster, which has always looked to Scotland for its inspiration, the Scots cart was first used for transporting linen, and one thinks of it spreading along the improved roads and being copied and adapted to local needs and traditions. Around Lough Erne, for instance, one reads of large one-horse carts, adopted by carriers in the early nineteenth century, which had 'trams' or rearshafts four feet long,[1] and these projections, surely a reminiscence of the long slide-car runners, are still characteristic of the 'flat' carts of the west and south-west (Fig. 60).

493 The Scots cart with its four-foot wheels was able to take twice the load of the native wheel-car, and as industry increased and roads were improved through the nineteenth century it drove the block-wheeled cars off the roads. But for rough work in the fields and bogs various types of slipe were preferred: the cart [554] was little used for harvesting and its possession was to some extent a sign of prestige. (Unlike the native car, the woodwork [531] of the cart was and is brightly painted, usually in red and blue.) The slipe and slide-car were better adapted to moist ground, to undrained fields and the uneven surface of ridge and furrow. As roads and farm practice were improved it was a new version of Scots cart (Fig. 60) which ultimately drove out the slide-car and the wheel-car in Ulster. It seems that the older varieties of Irish carts were derived from the Leith cart of the eastern lowlands of Scotland.[2] The body consisted of little more than a slatted platform without fixed sides and ends. This 'flat cart', as distinct from the 'box cart', is the usual pattern of farm cart in the west of Ireland and, fitted with springs, is the common hawker's cart. As a farm cart it suits the small farmer because it can be used for a variety of purposes by fitting different kinds of sides, for example tall slatted 'crates' for carrying turf.

493 177 531 Towards the middle of the nineteenth century there was evolved, in Lanarkshire and the neighbouring counties, the box cart with upright panelled sides perhaps derived from the

[1] L. Atthill, *Recollections of an Irish Doctor* (1911), 44.
[2] R. L. Edgeworth, *An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages* (1813).

 [Text continues on p. 178]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493
177

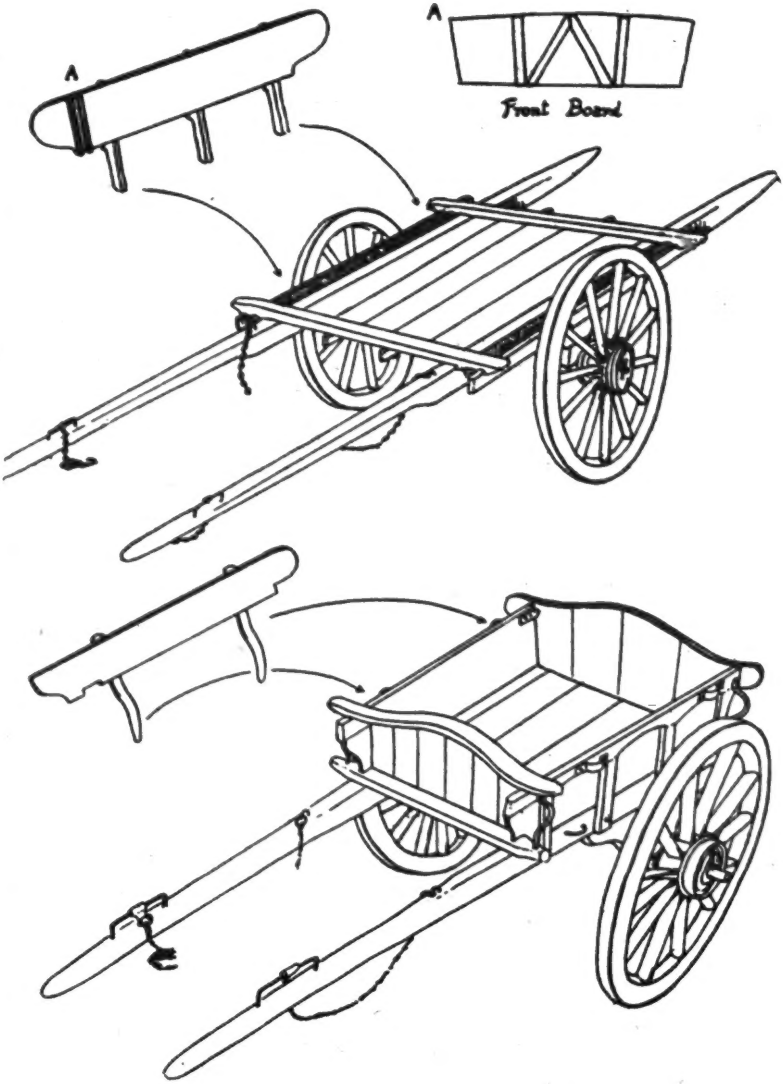


FIG. 60. The Scots cart in Ireland. *Above:* the flat cart with projecting trams, Killarney, Co. Kerry. *Below:* the improved box cart, Cushendall, Co. Antrim (after G. B. Thompson).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493
177
531

wagon, a sturdy vehicle which was manufactured by large Scottish firms and exported far and wide and also copied locally. Its distribution can be readily traced because it carried an unusual design on the front board—the 'spectacles'—consisting of a pattern of linked circles out cut of an outer layer of horizontal boarding which is applied to the main vertical boarding of the front-board. The design is further emphasized by being painted a contrasting colour, red or blue. The spectacle design became a kind of trade-mark of the Lanarkshire style of cart. It may have evolved simply by the gradual enlargement of two curving strengthening boards at top and bottom, until they met to form a design which became standardized (Fig. 61). C. F. Tebbutt is inclined to seek an origin in the magic *oculi* such as occur in prehistoric pottery and to this day on Mediterranean boats, but it is difficult to see the connecting links.[1] If one looks for a more practical origin it could be argued that when freshly painted front-boards were first fitted to carts they were marked and damaged by the rump and tail of the horse. At any rate I have occasionally noticed a spectacle-like pattern rubbed by the horse on to the paint of Scots carts not fitted with the recessed front-board. On this theory the board was strengthened by means of panelling while at the same time the shaped recess gave the horse's rear a little more space and saved the paint.

In Ireland the Scots cart with 'fiddle' (spectacle) decoration has an interesting distribution corresponding closely with the area of historic Scottish influence, from east Down across Antrim to Londonderry and north Donegal. It has replaced the flat-cart over much of Ulster, but the latter survives in south Fermanagh, in an area where thatched houses with hipped roofs are also found, representing an older culture-layer. In Scotland it is found throughout the Highlands and Islands, in the central lowlands and the south-west. In eastern England the Scots cart has replaced older forms over a wide area extending from Lincolnshire to North Bedfordshire and from Essex to South-east Nottinghamshire. Mr. Tebbutt believes that it was first introduced to the fenlands by improving farmers who, in the second half of last century, looked to the Scottish lowlands as a model of farming methods. In all these areas the original

[1] C. F. Tebbutt, *Man*, 55 (1955), 113–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

spectacle design was retained but in time instead of being panelled it was merely painted on the front-board. In Ulster carts of this kind, lacking the tilting device of the Scots prototype, have been made until recent years by many local wheelwrights, and it is interesting to notice how the original panelled design, which is present on old specimens, has been replaced by painted motifs which break up into many varieties, some of which are shown in Fig. 61. Mr. Tebbutt illustrates similar sequences of derived decoration on English carts.

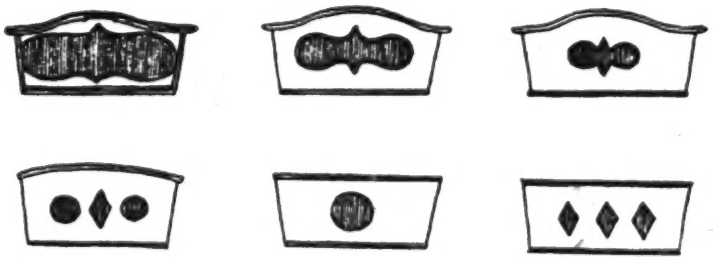


FIG. 61. The 'fiddle' design on the Scots cart in north-eastern Ireland. The front-boards illustrated are all from Co. Antrim and suggest both the derivation and the deterioration of the design. The upper examples are panelled and painted, the lower simply painted. The recess in the 'cape' of the first example is for the horse's tail.

The Scots cart with its box body, ideal for holding sacks of corn or potatoes, is not suited for carrying home crops, and both in Scotland and Ireland it is supplemented by a specialized harvest carrier known as the rick-shifter. This is a large platform with low wheels, fitted with a windlass by which the cock of hay or hut of corn is dragged into position on the platform. It is often dispensed with in moving hay cocks to the haggard, for they can easily be pulled or 'traced' along the ground simply by harnessing a horse to a chain placed around the base of the cock, a method which was used in the eighteenth century (Pl. 12). Six bullocks 'yoked as for ploughing' were employed for this purpose in Co. Meath.[1] The rick-shifter appears to have evolved

[1] W. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 217. See also J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, loc. cit.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 177 from the platform carts of the East Scottish or Leith type. Edgeworth remarks in 1813 that carts of this kind were common in the Low Countries and many parts of France. What more likely than that this model should have reached Scotland by way of the port of Leith? The district bordering the Firth of Forth was an area of rapid agricultural improvement after 1750, and it was to it that Irish landlords turned for new ideas at the end of the century. The rick-shifter was probably evolved at some period from the same source, for Edgeworth tells us that the platform carts of the Low Countries were fitted with windlasses attached to the shafts. But it is risky to speculate on these matters: for example, a simple horse-drawn hay-rake, now rarely seen, used to be considered characteristically Irish and was popularly known as a 'tumbling paddy'. This rotating sweep is stated to have been introduced from America in 1850.[1]

[1] *Agricultural Implements and Machinery* (Science Museum), 1980.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

uncut bog above, but one suspects that behind the custom there lies the widespread notion that a task should never be completely finished and that a small portion of anything taken by man should be left for luck or the fairies. You will be told that the steps are cut to avoid the curse of Columbkille, for it is said that the saint was once trapped in a bog hole and laid a curse on all who did not cut the three steps.

There are two methods of cutting, vertically or 'underfooting' and horizontally or 'breasting', and they tend to be used respectively on thin upland and deep lowland bogs, though these have to be cut underfoot if badly drained unless a platform or 'foot-go' of flow turf can be built up for the breaster to stand on. Also, the upper layers of brown turf which preserve some of the tough plant fibres are easier to cut vertically. Breasting not only imposes less strain on the back but speeds up the work, since the turves can be retained on the slane and placed directly on the barrow. (The vertical digger can do this only if his spade has a lift, that is bends forward.) In consequence the breast-cutter's turf-barrow will be designed for his convenience, for example it commonly has no legs so that he can swing it into position laterally by hooking the wing of his spade over the handle. Slanes, as well as barrows, will be found to vary in some slight degree from one bog to another, and a seemingly trivial difference can generally be explained in terms of differences of local conditions and techniques: the human ecology of the bogs is no less interesting than the plant ecology. In essentials the turf slane is a narrow straight-shafted steel blade with a wing set at right-angles after the manner of a cheese-knife, which is said, indeed, to owe its origin to 'an ingenious cutler of Dublin' who borrowed the idea from the slane.[1] The purpose of the wing is to detach a complete turf at a single stroke of the spade. The breadth and length of blade and wing are variables depending on many factors, but mainly on the size of turf required, and this in turn is determined to a considerable extent by the nature of the bog. If it is a very wet bog, for example, the turves must be cut larger than normal to allow for greater shrinkage on drying. When absolutely dry peat will shrink to less than one-eighth its original volume, and though air-dried peat still contains

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*, 96

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

way a separate hilt, frequently a cow's horn well polished by use, saved the strain on the palm of the hand, but many slanesmen preferred a handle shaped to their own taste and to the needs of the cutting technique required. In the Antrim Glens I have seen a bent piece of black sally carefully spliced on: this wood is said to have the virtue of absorbing sweat. The blade itself widens towards the cutting edge which is from four to six inches in width, the splay preventing the spade from sticking in the wet peat. The cutting edge of the wing is anything from four to seven inches long, and the top edge is finished in a variety of pleasing shapes and is often notched with the proprietary marks of the owner.

A breast slane can as a rule be distinguished from the underfoot by the upward slant of the cutting edge of the wing as viewed from the side with the spade held vertically, whereas the wing of the underfoot slane slopes down. This ensures that the face of the bog which is left after cutting shall be vertical when breasting and horizontal when underfooting, for the strokes are naturally made with a slight downward slope in the former case and a forward slope in the latter. Another difference is that the underfoot slane is normally provided with a foot-step on one side or the other, depending on whether the user is left or right handed. In practice the foot is not used, however, unless the peat is very tough and little humified. Bits of fibrous matter (called fog, cat or 'old wife's tow') clogging the cutting edge are troublesome, but it is kept clean by a quick preliminary jab into the peat, which reminds one of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the blacksmith. Modern slanes tend to have the blade made all in one piece, riveted to the haft with straps and fitted with a narrow foot-plate on the side away from the wing. (Fig. 62, 4.) The breast slane has been partly replaced, especially in wet bogs, by a short-handled flat spade which cuts larger peats (Fig. 62, 3). They are of a good shape for stacking and for transport on the canal-boats and, latterly, the lorries which supply Dublin with turf.

For taking the cut peats to the spread-field two wheelers and turf barrows are the minimum needs. The severed turves may be placed directly from the spade on to the waiting barrow, but a loader is more often required, lifting two turves at a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

time: his finger marks can still be seen when the dried turves are burning in the fire. In deep bogs the lifter may use a long-handled fork (Fig. 66, 2) or shovel, pitching the turves for the barrowman to load. A barrow load is anything from ten to twenty peats. Apparently crude and artless, the turf barrow is well designed for its purpose, and it shows many adaptations to local conditions and traditions (Fig. 63). It is slatted for lightness and is made almost entirely of wood, yet it must be strong enough to take heavy loads over rough ground: it should be low and flat for convenience in loading and unloading, yet it needs a large broad wheel for pushing over an uneven surface. Legs may be dispensed with, reduced to lugs or swept back to serve as runners. Again the shape of the handles and the slope of the front board depend on the method of loading and tipping, over the side or over the front. Every detail of the design is in answer to a general or local problem. If the ground is very rough or soft the barrow must be pulled, not pushed, and in extreme cases its place is taken by a slipe. In Antrim alone there are several varieties of turf slipe. All are slatted lengthwise—because the peats are loaded transversely—and are fitted with short corner posts and tipping handles. An interesting variant—the roller slipe—has been recorded but is no longer seen: it had two rollers fitted under the body of the sledge.[1] The dried peats also may be transported, if the bog is soft, on a slipe (Fig. 58, 5) or in a carrying basket (Fig. 57).

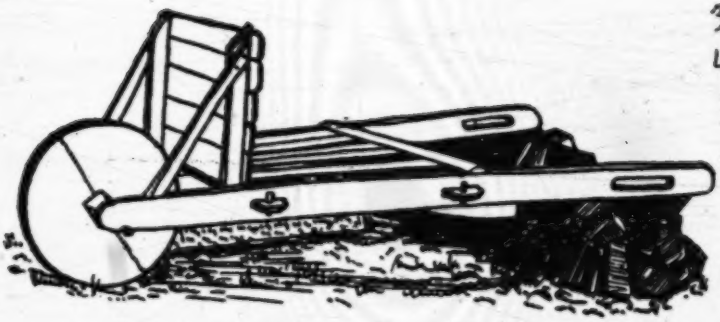
Despite ingenious shifts towards greater speed the spreading and drying of turf are inefficient because of the time taken in wheeling and handling and the great difficulty of drying turf which is spread on almost saturated surfaces. In exceptionally wet summers the peats do not dry out, and tragedy may follow if the winter is severe. It is then that the countryside is stripped of what little timber it can provide, and before coal was obtainable anything from furniture to fishbones and cowdung was utilized to boil the pot. In bogless districts dung was quite regularly used: there are several accounts of it in travel records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed in the treeless islands dung was until recently carefully harvested, gathered in piles in the fields in spring, and sometimes worked with the

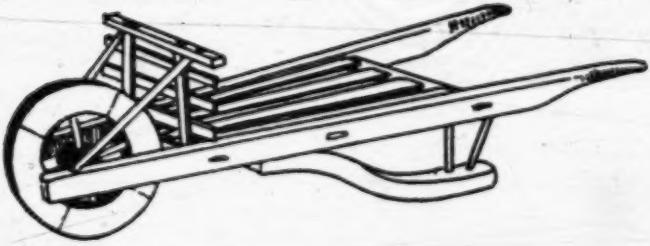
[1] E. E. Evans in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), plate 2A.

[Text continues on p. 194]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

314
493





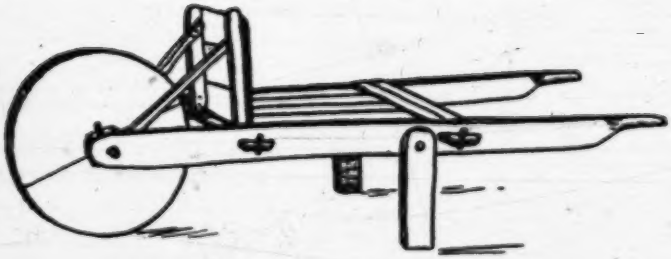


Fig. 68. Turf barrows from Cos. Meath, Donegal and Antrim

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times [262] are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 [437] A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-